

COMMENTARY

STORM CLOUDS OVER THE BOLIVIAN REFUGE

South America's New Pattern of Anti-Semitism

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THE Jewish communities of Bolivia, founded in flight from Hitlerian anti-Semitism, are less than twenty years old, yet the chill wind of fear of a new anti-Semitism has already passed over them. Now that a new revolutionary regime is in power there, the question is raised in urgent accents: is Bolivia an ultimate safe haven, or just one more brief anchorage in a wandering that began in 1933?

THE recent rise of anti-Semitism in Latin American countries has disturbed Jews all over the world, but its causes and accompanying factors still remain largely veiled by a general lack of knowledge of the social and political conflicts which underlie the new threat. SHERRY MANGAN, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY, has lived in Bolivia for the past year, experiencing the situation at first hand. He also knows Argentina, having worked there as correspondent for the Luce magazines after his expulsion from Paris, where he was chief of the Time bureau, by the Germans in August 1940. Mr. Mangan was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1904, and has spent most of his time since leaving Harvard abroad, chiefly in Paris. A poet as well as a journalist, he was one of the editors of a famous little magazine of the early 1930's, *Pagany*, and contributed to many other avant-garde publications. Since 1947, he has been a free-lance journalist. His most recent appearance in COMMENTARY was in February 1950 with an article on the postwar spread of psychoanalysis in France.

Though not till this century were there enough Jews there to resist assimilation, forced or voluntary, and form communities, Jews have been in Bolivia almost since its settlement. Numerous Marranos (Spanish and Portuguese Jews who were forcibly converted in the 16th century) were among the pioneers who, in 1557, under Nuño de Chávez, hacked their way six hundred miles north from Asunción del Paraguay deep into eastern Bolivia and there founded the city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Other Marranos, finding continued discrimination in La Paz and Potosí, flocked to Santa Cruz because it was the established city farthest from the meddling authorities. Thus, ironically, many of the most Catholic of Santa Cruz's old families are of Jewish descent without in the least being aware of it. Only rare traces remain: travelers report seeing seven-branched candlesticks among treasured family heirlooms, or some vestigial remnant of kosher food practices conserved simply as a family tradition.

The next immigration was not till 1871. A handful of French Jews from Alsace, dislodged by the Franco-Prussian War, and of German Jews from Prussia, penetrated to this remote republic, and such names as Levy, Rothmann, and Juding began to appear in Bolivian public records. They were too few to form a community, however, and within

a generation had all been absorbed into the prevailing Spanish Catholic culture.

During the next fifty years, Jews came to the country only in rare and isolated cases, most of them men filled with a spirit of adventure, yet the names Weil, Gabriel, and Freudenthal began to appear in the lists of influential citizens. It took another European convulsion, World War I and the Russian Revolution, to send a new wave of Jews to Latin America—usually to Argentina, and it was from there that a few venturesome souls pushed on to Bolivia. They too might all have been assimilated—as, indeed, many were—except for the rise of Hitler and the spread of anti-Semitism in Poland. The more foresighted Jews in Central and Eastern Europe began pulling out; a few reached Bolivia; and by May 1935 it was possible to organize an Israelite Circle (*Círculo Israelita*) in La Paz with thirty families.

BUT mass immigration took place only in 1938-39. The harried Joint Distribution Committee, forced to find immediate refuge for scores of thousands, performed wonders. And not the least wonderful was to discover that the government of, Colonel Germán Busch—himself of German descent and authoritarian mentality but, as it happened, no anti-Semite—would, almost alone among South American governments, issue visas to Jews *en masse*. From late 1938 till mid-1939, 12,000 Jewish refugees came from Europe into hospitable Bolivia. Of these, 4,000 were transit cases, already booked to continue on to bordering countries; the other 8,000 were to make Bolivia their home.

Some fortunate ones came to Bolivia direct from Germany in the relative comfort of the *Leipzig* or the *Patria*; others, sailing from France, fared not too ill on the *Colombo*; but thousands—2,400 on each voyage—suffered the misery of an ignoble Italian transport under ghastly hygienic conditions. The welcoming countries were more well-intentioned than technically prepared: in Chilean Arica, the refugees were housed in barracks; in Bolivian La Paz, in the jail. Practically none knew any Spanish. A few

had saved a little capital, but most were penniless.

The beginnings were hard. Those who had trades, such as mechanics, carpenters, painters, and engineers, made quick starts and rapid progress; but those who had not were forced to take what work they could get, even as waiters and servants. The Joint helped with loans and gifts, working with the new Bolivian organization SOPRO (*Sociedad de Protección de los Inmigrantes Israelitas*); and that unpredictable figure Mauricio Hochschild, the great tin magnate, for a long while contributed a thousand dollars a month to the support of his immigrant fellow Jews. The slow uphill climb began.

This time there was no question of their dissolving into the surrounding culture. They clung together, and by autumn both La Paz, the capital, and Cochabamba, Bolivia's second city, had founded *Gemeinden*, or organized Jewish communities. Cochabamba had the advantage of the presence of Rabbi Fritz Winter, who held services for three hundred people and taught forty children at school. Spanish courses, with one hundred and fifty enrolled, helped to naturalize many to their new surroundings.

Once settled, they began setting up other community organizations. First was the Macabi Sports Club, which by the feats of its members immediately disabused Bolivians of any notion that Jews were pale, rachitic people living indoors—indeed, this club continues to do a remarkable amount for the Jewish colony's prestige. By 1941, because of the top-heavy proportion of elderly people without younger relatives, a home for old people was established at Cochabamba, with room for forty people. At first it was financed by the Joint, but by 1945 the local SOPRO was able to take over.

Organizations like the Chevra Kadisha, Bikur Cholim, and the Sterbekasse (Burial Society) brought aid in religious matters, illness, and death. In Cochabamba such organizations were independent; in La Paz they were parts of the old-established *Círculo Israelita*. Indeed, certain rivalries have sprung up among Bolivian Jewry, first of which is

that between the Jews of La Paz and Cochabamba. The latter city boasts of having had, since 1947, a well-functioning Spar- und Hilfskasse (Savings and Aid Society) that both provides a safe investment for modest savings and helps newcomers to get a start. But La Paz can boast that, whereas Cochabamba has as yet only a Jewish kindergarten, La Paz has the Escuela Israelita Boliviana (Bolivian Israelite School), which already includes all primary grades and is beginning to set up the secondary ones, too. This school offers a general education in Spanish, plus religious instruction and courses in Hebrew; and so high is its reputation that it has more Gentile than Jewish Bolivians on its rolls.

A Liga de Damas (Ladies' Aid) cares for the sick and discreetly helps families too modest to apply publicly for aid. The B'nai B'rith has a chapter. The Women's International Zionist Organization is active. The Federación Sionista Unida Boliviana coordinates aid for Israel. And other associations and clubs abound.

Rabbi Winter was soon called to a more important post in Uruguay, and since then Bolivia has been without a rabbi. The reason seems to be that the graduates of American rabbinical seminaries, unaware of the extremely low cost of living in Bolivia, have consistently refused to accept appointments there because of doubt as to their ability to live on a salary which, expressed in dollars, looks small indeed, though it is ample for the country. At first religious services in both cities had to wander from one rented room to another. But in September 1945 in Cochabamba the Reform community started planning a synagogue. The cornerstone was laid in March 1946, and it was dedicated in June 1947. This handsome modern building, into whose walls is built in sorrowing memorial a stone from the principal Vienna synagogue destroyed by Nazi barbarism, has the odd distinction of being, at 8,432 feet, the highest synagogue in the world. In La Paz, the *Gemeinde*—whose members are German Jews and Reform—has just bought a house for conversion into a synagogue. The East European Jews, mostly Orthodox,

have a rented room in Cochabamba; in La Paz, they use the assembly hall in the Círculo Israelita's big modern building, which houses most of that city's Jewish organizations.

Unfortunately, both in La Paz and Cochabamba, East and Central European Jews are divided in two. The former, largely Polish and Rumanian, are grouped in the Círculo Israelita; the latter, largely German, Czech, and Austrian, in the Comunidad Israelita. Numerous efforts at bringing them together have been made, but in vain. More progress has been realized perhaps in La Paz, where a Comité Central Judío, consisting of the presidents of the Comunidad, the Círculo, and the Zionist Federation, coordinates the affairs of the otherwise divided Jewish community. It is hoped eventually to extend this coordinating authority to all Bolivia. And certainly, if troubles threaten Bolivian Jewry, it were better to hang together in at least a country-wide union.

IF ONLY La Paz and Cochabamba have been mentioned so far, it is because the overwhelming majority of Bolivia's Jews are concentrated there. Of the estimated 4,300 Jews now remaining, 3,000 are in the high, cold capital, La Paz (elevation: 12,220 feet); and 800 in flowery, easygoing Cochabamba. The dusty mining center of Oruro has but 120 Jews; the drowsing ex-capital, Sucre, and silver-famed Potosí, have 60 each; tropical lowland Santa Cruz has 50.

Because many Jews had entered with agricultural visas, several efforts were made to set up large-scale agricultural colonies. One, in the jungles of Chaparé, lasted from 1940 through 1941. But the region was unhealthy, and several colonists died; however, it was the lack of roads to suitable markets that finally defeated the venture. Hochschild between 1941 and 1945 spent some five million *bolivianos* (at the exchange then, close to \$100,000) on a big agricultural development for the immigrants at Coroico, but again the lack of roads to an adequate market brought failure in the end. These ventures, though unsuccessful, give the lie to a

chronic anti-Semitic accusation that Jewish refugees, admitted as farmers, never turned a single furrow, but rushed instantly one and all into commerce. There remain, in any case, about five big Jewish farms, mainly dairies, around La Paz, Cochabamba, and Santa Cruz.

The majority of the Jewish newcomers went into manufacturing and trade. The manufacturing was naturally on an artisan scale—small shops tanning leather, manufacturing bed-frames, furniture, and shoes, and shirts and knitwear and knitting wools and clothes in general. Numerous small retail shops were opened, and grew. And many went into "import-export." Abuses in every country have rendered "import-export" almost a dirty word, redolent of customs fraud, cooked-up manifests, black-market foreign exchange, etc. Yet the vast majority of Jewish importing houses in Bolivia enjoy an impeccable reputation.

HALF of the Jews who came to Bolivia between 1935 and 1939, ambitious for broader horizons, gradually migrated to the United States, as their finances and the immigration quotas permitted. The rest adapted themselves contentedly to a culture which, if backward and strange, at least afforded opportunity for material success and a civilized life.

Bolivia, when they arrived, betrayed no signs whatever of the presence of anti-Semitism. There were a few Nazified Germans, naturalized and otherwise, who spread their poison diligently and had some effect eventually, but never on the government. Relations with the authorities were excellent: indeed, when Jews with German passports were innocently caught in the arrests of German and Japanese nationals that were one of the conditions imposed by the American government for its recognition of the Villa-roel government in 1944, the Jewish community was granted a power usually limited to sovereign states: German Jews were released provided that the officials of the Jewish community issued them a sort of internal passport certifying their identity as Jews.

The war in Palestine brought a brief flurry of trouble. Young Arabs went round at night scrawling anti-Semitic slogans on walls and breaking the glass signs of Jewish merchants. But a night patrol organized by the young athletes of the Macabi put a quick stop to this.

But if there were very few overt acts, an undercurrent of anti-Semitism that had begun soon after the refugees' arrival was spreading dangerously through the Bolivian population, stimulated, after the close of the war, by a new wave of arrivals from Germany—this time Nazis and "ex"-Nazis. By 1951 anti-Semitism was beginning to break through to the surface. Last winter the first anonymous leaflet appeared in La Paz; it showed the hook-beaked caricature of a Jew lugging a black suitcase, and the slogan, "Kill the Jew!" The La Paz German Club introduced an "Aryan" provision into its by-laws. In early April of this year leaflets again appeared in La Paz, purporting to be issued by a "Comité de Defensa del Pueblo Boliviano," which blamed Jews for all the misery, shortages, and hoarding from which Bolivia is currently suffering, and, what was graver still, recommended as a solution the mass plundering of Jewish stores. In Cochabamba, the ASINCONAL (Asociación Industrial y Comercial Nacional), a faction within the official Chamber of Commerce, launched a strong campaign to have the government bar Jews from commercial activity.

Then, to top it all, the April revolution brought to power in Bolivia the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (Nationalist Revolutionary Movement), generally called the MNR. This party's written program contains two anti-Semitic declarations of principle; but, more disturbingly, it has long had a general reputation as being anti-Semitic, and many of its members have been extremely vocal on the subject. It is not surprising that a tremor ran through Bolivia's Jewish colonies.

Unquestionably the MNR now holds the key to the situation in Bolivia. But before analyzing the degree to which overt anti-Semitic acts can be expected of it, it would

be useful to examine the origins, particularities, and principal charges made by Bolivian anti-Semitism.

ITS first characteristic is that, in its origins as in many of its manifestations, it is less anti-Semitism as such than a specific case of a general xenophobia. The "mass" immigration of Jews reached Bolivia just at a time when she was beginning to feel the most disastrous of the inflationary after-effects of her war with Paraguay over the Gran Chaco. The *boliviano* had dropped in real value from two and a half to the dollar to four at the beginning of 1939, and thirty-five at the end of the same year. Wages and indeed all incomes had not yet made the adjustment to inflation that they later did. Meanwhile prices skyrocketed to such a height that every shopkeeper seemed a fiend incarnate. The rapid spread of Jews through Bolivia's retail trade at just this moment made them immediate targets for popular resentment. The same factors—refugee Jewish storekeepers occupying the most exposed positions as targets of the resentment against inflation—have brought about a growth of anti-Semitism in other Latin American countries, especially Venezuela, Ecuador, and Costa Rica. This would have occurred had the retailers been Spanish instead of Jewish. A similar situation brought similar feeling against the Chinese in Burma. Comic confirmation of the xenophobic nature of Bolivian anti-Semitism was brought at the end of April by the airing of a scandal in the Cochabamba schools, where black-haired and dark-skinned children, sometimes with the indifference or approval of their teachers, had been jeering at and beating up as "Jews" all children who were blond—a situation that must have caused added aggravation to the Nazi German fathers of some of the victims.

Far from comic, however, is the basic fact that anti-Semitism in Bolivia is not confined to psychotics and hysterics, or to a few middle-class groups who feel worsted in business competition, but is firmly rooted throughout the poorer classes, except, possibly, the industrial workers. This situation is as grave

as it is unique. Scratch any shop-clerk, taxi-driver, gardener, maid, government clerk, market-woman, llama-drover, or petty artisan, and you will find an unreasoning and imbecile venom against Jews. Grimly typical was the incident during President Víctor Paz Estenssoro's speech to twenty thousand supporters welcoming him back from exile. When he stated that the new government would take the severest measures against tradesmen who hoarded goods and unjustifiably raised prices, a roar went up: "The Jews!" Be it said to the credit of Paz Estenssoro (who incidentally was the lawyer for the Jewish SOPRO in 1939) that he answered, "Jews or non-Jews! Anybody!" But the mob felt otherwise. Though the present danger may pass because no irresponsible leaders are trying to whip up overt anti-Semitic acts, the fact must never be overlooked that there lies waiting this mass reservoir of latent anti-Semitism. And it is the fundamental fact of the present Bolivian crisis.

The specifically Bolivian charges of the anti-Semites can be summed up under four heads: non-fulfilment of agricultural visas; monopoly of trade; speculation and foreign-exchange juggling; professionalization of bribery.

Oddly enough, it is the masses and not the professional anti-Semites who press the first charge. The latter admit frankly that penniless immigrants have the right to expect temporary housing, tools, seeds, and crop loans, and if all the government can do is wave at a patch of unreclaimed jungle, they can well be excused for returning to the cities. But the populace is not equally fair, and it keeps on mindlessly parroting this nonsense.

The second charge, monopoly of commerce, is without any real foundation. No bank, or industry over artisan size, is Jewish-owned. The largest firm with a Jewish interest is the middle-sized national silk works, FANASE (Fábrica Nacional de Sedas), which was founded by a Jew and a Japanese. The clothing trade is, as in many places, pretty well dominated by Jewish firms; but

again, they are on the artisan scale, there is no monopoly, and anybody may compete with them. In textile manufacturing, as a matter of fact, the country's only really big combine, a semi-monopoly, is Arab-owned. For the rest, there has been of course a proliferation of little Jewish shops and import firms, but they have no more of a monopoly than the Yugoslavs or any other group—that is, none at all.

Paradoxically, the fact that Mauricio Hochschild was long the animator, and remains the principal stockholder, of one of the three enormous tin-mining combines, has not provoked anti-Semitic accusations under this head. Hochschild is hated, not as a Jew, but as a tin magnate. As such he is just one of the trio, Patiño-Hochschild-Aramayo, which is pronounced as one word in Bolivia, and it is, among the populace, a spitting word.

To weigh the third charge, it is necessary to know two facts: Bolivia has suffered for well over a decade from a steady and incurable inflation; its imports—and it imports almost everything, including the bulk of its food—are made on a government-license basis at artificial low rates: sixty *bolivianos* per dollar for necessities, one hundred for semi-necessities, as against an open-market rate of two hundred and twenty at the time of writing. Stocking against certain price rises, and wangling for government-licensed *divisas* (foreign exchange) at the official rates, are here normal and universal business practice. It may be a bad system, open to abuses, but there is no evidence whatever that Jewish businessmen abuse the situation more than any other group.

On this last point, there is some evidence. Bolivia has always been a poor country, with functionaries so wretchedly paid that their corruptibility has been for decades taken as a matter of course. Without a little "gratification," many matters which should take half an hour have a way of taking weeks. The anti-Semites admit this, but say bribery was mild and spotty before the 1938-39 immigration, whereas now the rates have spurted way up and the system has been extended

to every branch of government and of private business. One anti-Semite phrased it, "We were just amateurs at bribery; the Jews have made it professional." The anti-Semites are not fazed in the slightest by the observation that it takes two to consummate bribery, a recipient as well as an offerer. Those businessmen who privately admit the practice say in self-justification that unless they bribed it would be impossible to maintain the kind of business rhythm normal to normal countries, and that without bribery business activity would relapse into a lethargic drift-and-drowse rhythm that might satisfy Bolivians but would drive any other kind of businessman mad in a few months.

That there are occasional abuses is probable; indeed, no ethnic, religious, or any other kind of group has ever existed without some dishonest members. The leaders of Bolivian Jewry clearly recognize the danger that the few of its members who are guilty of sharp practices represent for their honest fellow Jews. Exposed, and their crooked behavior trumpeted as typical Jewish practice by unscrupulous anti-Semitic agitators, they could bring the gravest discredit and danger to the entire Jewish community. But the latter's leaders have no power of discipline here. Their only weapons are public opinion and ostracism—which is insufficient when applied to people whose trouble is precisely that they are *not* moral. Jewish leaders in Bolivia are acutely aware of the problem, but as yet have found no solution.

IN THIS whole general situation, then, the first Jewish reaction to the MNR's successful revolution was nervousness and fear. Both were fully justified by the party's program and even more by its reputation, and both were deepened by awareness of the presence of an inflammable reservoir of popular anti-Semitism. But as the days and then weeks passed without anything happening, the vast majority of Bolivia's Jews swung round from pessimism to extreme optimism, telling themselves that things would now be better than ever. At the end of six weeks MNR chiefs met with Jewish leaders, and

assurances were given that there was no anti-Semitism in the MNR and that the Jewish colony might relax in the knowledge that absolutely no discriminatory measures against them were envisaged by the new government. To demonstrate their sincerity, the MNR leaders fired a bank clerk who had celebrated the revolution by being outrageously rude to a Jewish client. With the news of this meeting, Jewish optimism became total and almost universal.

In the opinion of a few of the most thoughtful members of the Jewish community, and of the present writer, both the original fright and the present confidence are exaggerated and unjustified. The April revolution was not the culmination but the beginning of serious political developments in Bolivia and the real anti-Semitic danger lies not in the past, but in the future. To understand why, it is necessary to learn a little about that complex and curious phenomenon, the MNR.

THE Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria is Bolivia's popular mass party. It controls today at least half of the some 185,000 Bolivians who are theoretically permitted to vote, as well as the overwhelming majority of the approximately 2,800,000 others disenfranchised by Bolivia's disgraceful election laws. As such, it is an *omnium gatherum* of people of every sort of political opinion, from downright fascists in its extreme right wing to Communist sympathizers in its extreme left. Its program is similarly a hodgepodge which reflects the disparity of its component elements. What holds it together is its anti-imperialist nationalism, its hatred of the "rosca"—the ring of big tin-mining corporations that has for decades constituted a state within the state, and is more powerful than the formal state itself—and its promises to improve the lot of the Bolivian industrial and semi-serf agricultural workers, whose misery must be seen to be believed.

The MNR has the support of both sectors of Bolivian Communism. As elsewhere in the world, the Stalinist Communists—here represented by two separate parties, a right-

wing front, the Partido de la Izquierda Revolucionaria, and a newly-formed official and more openly radical party, the Partido Comunista—will make alliances with or offer unconditional support to any kind of regime, progressive or reactionary, provided it is at all anti-American. The MNR, with its slogans of anti-imperialism and nationalization of foreign enterprises, seems to them to fill this prescription. A rebuff they received in a recent MNR manifesto has nowise cooled the ardor of their wooing. The Trotskyist Communists, who in Bolivia far surpass the Stalinist Communists in numbers and influence, have a more complex and principled position. They support, not so much the MNR and its government as such, but what they consider progressive in its program. Simultaneously, they tell the Bolivian workers and peasant that the MNR does not really mean to carry out this program, and they hope, if these predictions are fulfilled, to win over the MNR mass base on the rebound of their disappointment.

While out of power the heterogeneity of a party like the MNR is relatively unimportant. Its program, untried in practice, can remain vague, and it can permit itself the most demagogic promises. But once it takes state power, its program must be made concrete and applied, and its promises kept or dishonored. There begins inevitably a process of political clarification and polarization; fundamental differences are revealed, and wings and factions created. It took less than a month for this process to reach such a point that right-wing Vice-President Sile Zuazo could, in an interview he gave to the *New York Times*, refer to the ideas of left-wing Minister of Mines and Petroleum Juan Lechín Orquendo as "foolish and fatuous."

One example should suffice to show what is at work. All tendencies in the MNR are for the nationalization of the three big mining combines, Patiño, Aramayo, and Hochschild. But to the right and left wings "nationalization" means two completely different things. To the left—and to the MNR's mass base, especially the mineworkers—it means immediate expropriation without com-

pensation, and government operation under close control by the mineworkers themselves. The majority in the cabinet—which, besides a bankrupt treasury, is faced with a two-front political war against plots by the ousted right, and against pressure from its own left—leans to the right and is determined to defend private property and fight all socializing tendencies. Thus the nationalization program so far has meant only the setting up of a four-months' research commission that is also negotiating with the mining companies on compensation. It will probably end in a compromise whereby the companies remain in administration while the government controls the use of the foreign exchange earned.

In theory both plans can be called "nationalization," but in practice they are soon going to bring the MNR's right-wing leadership and its left-wing mass base into violent conflict. The situation is similar in the agricultural field. The right wing envisages the mildest and most gradual sort of agrarian reform; while the semi-serf Indians expect an immediate and total agrarian revolution, supported if necessary by bloody *jacqueries*.

In sum, the MNR has made demagogic promises to the Bolivians that it will be, predictably, unable to fulfill in anything like the form expected. Disappointment and impatience are already visible and audible, and are increasing very rapidly. At some point: in the next year, and rather sooner than later, these are going to reach a pitch where the stability of the new regime will be imperiled.

AT THIS point, and not elsewhere, lies the real danger of anti-Semitism in Bolivia. Postulate a situation wherein the MNR's right wing is faced with mass discontent (and in volcanic Bolivia, especially today with over ten thousand rifles seized from the armories in the April revolution still in civilian hands, mass discontent is no academic matter); shortages continue; prices, far from being rolled back, continue to rise; the MNR's

promises to raise living standards still remain unfulfilled. The people are angry. In such a situation the temptation will be great to try to divert popular indignation by propagating charges that it is the Jewish shopkeepers who hoard, the Jewish manufacturers who drive up prices, and the Jewish importers who commit frauds with the scarce foreign exchange. The reservoir of popular anti-Semitism renders it likely that such rumors would be all too readily believed. The situation is not new: elsewhere the Jew has been made the scapegoat for bad economic conditions due to quite other factors. But in Bolivia an outbreak of anti-Semitism could have a nationally characteristic suddenness and violence.

Such an outbreak would find Bolivia's Jews rather ill-prepared. Only about a quarter have become Bolivian citizens as yet. Visas for neighboring countries are difficult and take a long time to obtain. The minority that preferred Israel has mostly gone there already. A few highly vocal members of the community are already speaking of Bolivia as a possible trap, and urging that Jewish organizations in the United States consider measures, first for the protection and then the removal of Jews from Bolivia.

In the view of the present writer, such perspectives are exaggerated. Coldly weighed, the chances are good for avoiding anti-Semitic acts, legal or illegal. But the first step in combating the danger is to recognize it and state its existence. Euphoric confidence or ostrich pretense are poor defenses. It is necessary, at the same time, to stand up to anti-Semitism firmly and boldly. It is fatal to buy up a whole edition of anti-Semitic leaflets, or give furniture gratis to a blackmailing functionary of the new regime, or in any other way yield to demands tantamount to blackmail or ransom. Such tactics are a confession of weakness, a retreat before the main attack is even made, and the best way in the world to whet the appetite of unprincipled adventurers.